

Character Education Strategies for Children with Special Needs

Steven S. N. Rogahang^{1*}

Abstract

Character education aims to teach children to develop good behaviour patterns and character traits from an early age so that these positive traits become an inherent and rooted part of them. Children with special needs have abnormalities or differences in physical, mental, and social compared to normal children. The type of research used is literature or literature studies, where researchers rely on various literature sources to obtain research data and use a qualitative approach because the data produced is in the form of words or descriptions. Strategies that can be used to recognize the character of children with special needs include opening a more open mind, adapting to children, increasing emotional closeness with children, teaching children to develop skills, learning children's habits and needs, and involving children in available therapies. Services to children with special needs cannot be equated but must be tailored to the characteristics of their individual needs and abilities.

Keywords: organizational management; matriculation program; arabic language

History:

Received : 22 Maret 2024

Revised : 25 May 2024

Accepted : 29 May 2024

Published : 11 June 2024

¹Universitas Negeri Manado

*Author Correspondent: stevenrogahang@unima.ac.id

Publishers: LPM IAIN Shaykh Abdurrahman Siddik Bangka Belitung, Indonesia

Licensed: This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



Introduction

Character education is essential in forming ethical values and behaviour for children, including children with special needs (Putri et al., 2023; Samsuri, 2023). Children with special needs have unique challenges developing positive values and social skills needed in everyday life (Ningrum, 2022). In this context, appropriate character education strategies become very important to help them develop their best potential and prepare them to become contributing members of society (Aningsih et al., 2022; Sugiarto & Farid, 2023).

Character education aims to teach children to develop good behaviour patterns and traits early so that these positive qualities become inherent and rooted in them (Denok & Hardiyanti, 2022). Efforts to realize the mandate of Pancasila and the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution are known as building the character of the nation's children. This is due to various problems faced by the country today, such as vagueness and lack of understanding of Pancasila values (Monisa et al., 2024), lack of an integrated policy framework to realize these values (Iqbal et al., 2023), shifts in ethical values in the life of the nation and state (Kasanah et al., 2022), decreased awareness of the nation's cultural values, and the threat of national disintegration (Juherna, 2020).

Children with special needs often face difficulties in social interaction, controlling emotions, and understanding prevailing social norms (Mukti & Harimi, 2021). Therefore, character education that focuses on developing values such as honesty, cooperation, empathy, and responsibility becomes very relevant to them. By strengthening the character and morale of children with special needs, they can be better prepared to face the challenges of daily life and achieve success in various aspects of life. However, implementing effective character development programs for children with special needs can be difficult. Unique strategies are needed to meet the demands and features of each individual. Therefore, research and discussion on character education programs specifically designed for children with special needs is fundamental to meet their needs.

Character education strategies that can be applied to children with special needs. Introducing an approach that integrates character values in lessons, ethical behaviour models, service-based learning projects, and creating a supportive environment (Fauziah et al., 2020). This study aims to provide practical insights and guidance for educators, parents, and related parties in supporting the character development of children with special needs.

Method

The type of research used is literature or literature studies, where researchers rely on various literature sources to obtain research data and use a qualitative approach because the data produced is in the form of words or descriptions. Literature research is a type of research that focuses on analyzing library sources or literature. In this study, researchers use similar or related studies as the basis for research. After collecting relevant literature relevant to the research, researchers observed the Holy Tower. Then, the object of the research was investigated through various information from library sources such as books, scientific journals, digital data, ethnomathematics-based RPP, documents, and so on to analyze the structure of the Holy Tower building and the application of ethnomathematics in the context of the Holy Tower (Adlini, 2022).

Literature study research or literature study has several characteristics. First, researchers are not directly involved with field data collection but rely on existing data in the literature (Hapsara, 2019). The library data is generally a secondary source, not original data obtained directly from observations or field research. In addition, library data is not limited by space and time because researchers can access a variety of literature from various places and periods. However, it should be noted that this view is not entirely acceptable when viewed from the purpose of the study. In general, research objectives can be divided into several categories. First, research is discovery, where the data collected is new data that was previously unknown. Second, research is substantial, where the data collected is used to prove or test doubts about existing knowledge. Third, research is developmental, where the data obtained is used to deepen or expand existing knowledge. Literature study research can contribute to achieving the research objectives through analysis, synthesis, or rearrangement of existing information in the literature to generate new understanding, prove a hypothesis, or develop existing knowledge.

Results and Discussion

Character education is an approach that aims to form and develop positive character in individuals (Wahyuni, 2020). Character education aims to help students develop moral values, ethics, leadership, empathy, and social skills essential in everyday life. The benefits of character education are (1) Forming a good personality, (2) Improving the quality of social relationships, (3) Improving the ability to overcome conflicts, (4) Increasing academic achievement, and (5) Preparing students to become good leaders.

Character education has significant benefits in forming a good personality, improving social relationships, overcoming conflicts, improving academic achievement, and preparing students to be good leaders. Character education plays a vital role in shaping individuals with strong moral and ethical values, which will contribute to the formation of a better society.

Character education is also important and relevant for children with special needs (Bidaya & Dari, 2020). Children with special needs also need adequate character education to help them develop an upbeat personality and face challenges in daily life.

Here are some reasons why character education is essential for children with special needs:

- a. Build self-confidence. Children with special needs often face challenges and difficulties that are different from the average child. Through character education, they can learn to accept themselves for who they are, appreciate their uniqueness, and build a strong sense of self-confidence. By building self-confidence, they will be better able to overcome obstacles and reach their full potential.

- b. Improve social skills. That is, children with special needs may face difficulties in interacting socially and understanding social norms. Through character education, they can learn about values such as cooperation, empathy, and understanding of others. This will help them improve their social skills and build better relationships with others.
- c. Character education can help children with special needs develop positive attitudes toward themselves and others. They are taught to value the uniqueness of each individual, respect differences, and build mutually beneficial relationships. Thus, they will have a more positive attitude towards themselves and others, creating an inclusive and supportive environment.
- d. Overcoming obstacles and challenges, that is children with special needs, often face obstacles and challenges in daily life. Character education can help them develop perseverance, discipline, and the ability to overcome barriers. By learning values such as perseverance and discipline, they will become more persistent in facing challenges and achieving their goals.
- e. Increasing independence, namely character education, can also help children with special needs develop independence. Through learning values such as responsibility, discipline, and hard work, they will become more independent in going about their daily lives and overcoming obstacles they may face.

Character education is also essential for children with special needs. Through character education, children with special needs can develop positive personalities, social skills, good attitudes toward themselves and others, and the ability to overcome obstacles. Character education provides a solid foundation for them to face the world with confidence and independence.

Special needs child is a term used to describe children with special needs in their physical, mental, emotional, or social development. These special needs can include a variety of conditions, such as autism, developmental disorders, hearing or vision impairments, learning difficulties, conduct disorders, and so on. Children with special needs need attention, support, and an educational approach that fits their needs. This includes providing an inclusive environment, adequate accessibility, mentoring, special education, therapy, and other supports to help them grow and develop optimally.

It is essential to understand that every child with special needs has different uniqueness and challenges. Therefore, the approach to education and care must be adapted to their individual needs and characteristics. By providing the proper support, children with special needs can reach their potential, develop skills, and gain a quality of life on par with other children. Children with special needs have various disorders. In this study, we interviewed a parent of a student who has a child with special needs autism and hyperactivity disorders. Here are the initial strategies given by the parents to children with special needs:

1. Open a more open mind

Parents need to have an open mind before dealing with children with special needs. Parents need to instill in themselves that children with special needs are not something that should be covered up or considered a disgrace. Opening a more open mind is not only done by parents, but educators also need to realize that children with special needs have different uniqueness and challenges in developing the character of children with special needs. Therefore, it is essential not to limit the views or expectations of children with special needs.

By opening a more open mind, parents and educators can better accept and appreciate the diversity of character of children with special needs. They must understand that each child has unique potential and can develop according to their abilities. In addition, a more open mind also allows parents and educators to find and adopt character education strategies that suit the needs and potential of children with special needs. This involves adjusting teaching methods, understanding the child's needs in-depth, and providing appropriate support. By having an open mind, parents and educators can create an inclusive educational environment and strengthen the positive character of children with special needs. This will help them grow and develop into independent, empathetic, and contributing societal individuals.

2. Adapting to the child

Adaptation is needed between parents and children with special needs themselves. This adaptation does not always go smoothly, but whatever steps are taken, the child's development will not be helped. When the adaptation process goes well, other methods will also run well. Good adaptation will help parents understand the situation and the potential possessed by the child.

Adapting to children with special needs involves profoundly understanding their needs and potential. Parents and educators need to involve themselves in the process of observation and communication with children to know how to best deal with their needs. This includes understanding their learning styles, communication tendencies, and preferences in the learning process. In addition, adapting also means providing a supportive and inclusive environment for children with special needs. This can involve adapting teaching methods, classroom settings, and learning aids to suit the child's needs.

In adapting, parents and educators can create an environment that allows children with special needs to feel accepted, supported, and motivated to develop their character. This will help them to grow and develop optimally and optimize their potential in internalizing positive values and developing social skills needed in everyday life.

3. Improves emotional bonding with children

It is essential to strengthen emotional bonds with children so that they feel trusting and close to their parents. Children will feel safe and open in interacting with their parents when a strong emotional bond is established. To increase emotional bonding with children with special needs, parents and educators need to appreciate and acknowledge their uniqueness and needs. This involves listening attentively, expressing love and support constantly, and creating a time to interact and get to know your child better.

In addition, it is essential to create a safe, supportive, and loving environment for children with special needs. This includes providing consistent attention, building trust, and showing empathy for your child's feelings and experiences. Increasing emotional bonding is essential to avoid excessive criticism or unfair treatment. Instead, focus on positive reinforcement, giving praise, and providing encouragement that builds your child's confidence. By promoting strong emotional bonds between parents, educators, and children with special needs, children will feel supported, accepted, and loved. This will help them feel safe and comfortable through the character education process, thus allowing them to internalize positive values and develop social skills necessary in daily life.

4. Teaching children to develop skills

Someone close to a child with special needs needs to put extra effort into caring for them. Even though children have special needs, adults are still responsible for protecting and helping them grow. In this case, it is essential to help children develop skills that can help them concentrate and regulate their emotions. By understanding a child's potential, parents can help them be more productive.

To teach skills to children with special needs, there needs to be an approach tailored to their needs and abilities. Some steps that can be taken are as follows: 1) Individual understanding, which is essential to understanding the individual needs and potential of children with special needs; By understanding their characteristics, educators and parents can design appropriate strategies to develop appropriate skills; 2) Selection of appropriate learning methods, namely each child with special needs has a different learning style. It is essential to adapt the learning method to suit the preferences and needs of the child. For example, using visual, kinesthetic, or auditory approaches in teaching skills; 3) Application of structured learning principles; children with special needs can benefit from structured learning principles. Educators and parents can use clear steps, repeat information with consistency, and provide constructive feedback to help children under-

stand and develop skills; 4) Support and modelling, which is essential to provide continuous support and modelling to children with special needs in developing skills. Providing positive encouragement, modelling expected behaviour, and assistance if needed can help children in the learning process and skill development; and 5) Practice and application, i.e., the skills taught must be practised and applied in daily life. Giving children opportunities to use the skills they've learned in real contexts can help them reinforce and master those skills.

By teaching children with special needs to develop relevant skills, they will be able to overcome obstacles they may face and achieve success in character development. These skills will also help them interact with others, manage emotions, and deal with daily challenges.

5. Understand your child's needs and habits

Children with special needs have different needs and habits. Therefore, parents need to understand both things. By understanding the needs and habits of children, parents can be more accustomed to dealing with children with special needs. Educators and parents can design more effective and inclusive educational approaches by understanding the needs and habits of children with special needs. This will help shape the child's character, meet their needs, and help them grow and develop optimally.

6. Include the child in available therapies.

Therapy is an integral part of the care of children with special needs. Therefore, parents should bring their children to therapy regularly as much as possible. Regular therapy can help children live with a quality of life equal to other children. By involving children with special needs in available therapies, they can get the support and assistance needed for character development, social skills, and adaptability. Therapy helps children with special needs live with a quality of life equal to other children and strengthens positive character. That is important in the education of children with special needs.

Conclusion

The initial strategy given by parents to children with special needs involves several essential steps. First, parents need to have an open mind and realize that children with special needs are not something that should be covered up or considered a disgrace. Second, adaptation between parents and children with special needs is needed so children's development can run well. In addition, strengthening emotional bonds with children is very important so they feel safe and close to their parents. Next, parents must help children develop skills to help them with concentration and emotion regulation. Understanding the needs and habits of children is also essential so that parents can be more accustomed to dealing with them. Finally, including your child in available therapies can help them live a quality of life equal to other children. By implementing this strategy, it is hoped that children with special needs can get optimal support in their development and growth.

Reference

- Adlini, dkk. (2022). Metode Penelitian Kualitatif Studi Pustaka. *Edumaspul: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 6(1), 974–980. <https://doi.org/10.33487/edumaspul.v6i1.3394>
- Aningsih, Zulela, M., Neolaka, A., Iasha, V., & Setiawan, B. (2022). How is the Education Character Implemented? The Case Study in Indonesian Elementary School. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 12(1), 371. <https://doi.org/10.36941/jesr-2022-0029>
- Bidaya, Z., & Dari, S. M. (2020). Revolusi Mental Melalui Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter untuk Siswa Berkebutuhan Khusus di Kota Mataram. *CIVICUS: Pendidikan-Penelitian-Pengabdian Pendidikan Pancasila Dan Kewarganegaraan*, 8(2), 51. <https://doi.org/10.31764/civicus.v8i2.2861>
- Denok, M., & Hardiyanti, D. (2022). Penerapan Pendidikan Karakter Melalui Kegiatan Seni Di Lembaga Paud. *Sentra Cendekia*, 3(3), 94. <https://doi.org/10.31331/sencenivet.v3i3.2275>

- Fauziah, S. B., Mahmudah, F. N., & Susatya, E. (2020). Strategi Pembiasaan Karakter Bagi Peserta Didik Berkebutuhan Khusus. *JMKSP (Jurnal Manajemen, Kepemimpinan, Dan Supervisi Pendidikan)*, 5(1), 21. <https://doi.org/10.31851/jmksp.v5i1.3512>
- Hapsara, A. S. (2019). Membangun Karakter Mandiri pada Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus Melalui Strategi Scrum di Negeri Totochan. *Jurnal Ideguru*, 4(1), 13–21.
- Iqbal, M., Rahmah, A., Munthe, W., Harahap, R., & Siregar, A. H. (2023). Analisis Kebijakan Pendidikan Full Day School di SD Islam Terpadu Al Anshar Tanjung Pura. *Journal on Education*, 05(02), 2426–2435. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v5i2.901>
- Juherna, dkk. (2020). Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter pada Disabilitas Anak Tunarungu. *Jurnal Golden Age*, 4(01), 12–19. <https://doi.org/10.29408/jga.v4i01.1809>
- Kasanah, S. U., Rosyadi, Z., NURNGAINI, I., & Wafa, K. (2022). Pergeseran Nilai-nilai Etika, Moral dan Akhlak Masyarakat di Era Digital. *SINDA: Comprehensive Journal of Islamic Social Studies*, 2(1), 68–73. <https://doi.org/10.28926/sinda.v2i1.478>
- Monisa, D., Anderson, I., & Dewi, N. (2024). Analisis Strategi Guru Ppkn Dalam Menanamkan Nilai-Nilai Multikultural Pada Siswa Kelas Xi Sman 7 Kerinci. In *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* (Vol. 9, Issue 1).
- Mukti, P. Y., & Harimi, A. C. (2021). Manajemen Pendidikan Karakter Bagi Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus Pada Kelas Inklusi di SD Terpadu Putra Harapan Purwokerto. *Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pengembangan ...*, 9(1), 74–83.
- Ningrum, N. A. (2022). Strategi Pembelajaran pada Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus dalam Pendidikan Inklusi. *Indonesian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(3), 181–196.
- Putri, N. N. A., Avianika, K. A., & Kembara, M. D. (2023). Peran Pancasila Sebagai Upaya Membangun Etika Anak. *JURNAL PENDIDIKAN KEWARGANEGARAAN DAN FILSAFAT*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.59581/jpkf-widyakarya.v1i2.389>
- Samsuri, S. (2023). Implementasi Nilai Pendidikan Karakter Pada Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus. *Early Stage*. <http://ejournal.iaingawi.ac.id/index.php/Earlystage/article/view/760%0Ahttps://ejournal.iaingawi.ac.id/index.php/Earlystage/article/download/760/379>
- Sugiarto, & Farid, A. (2023). Literasi Digital Sebagai Jalan Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter Di Era Society 5.0. *Cetta: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, 6(3), 580–597. <https://doi.org/10.37329/cetta.v6i3.2603>
- Wahyuni, F. (2020). Strategi Guru dalam Pembelajaran PAI bagi Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus di SMPLB-YPPC Labui. *Tadabbur: Jurnal Peradaban Islam*, 2(1), 67–84. <https://doi.org/10.22373/tadabbur.v2i1.31>